

GCC welcomes improved ties with Iran

NICOSIA (R) — Foreign ministers of the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) welcomed improved relations with Iran and called Sunday for a new phase of cooperation to promote regional security and stability. A statement issued after a two-day meeting in the Saudi Arabian Red Sea port of Jeddah said the ministers also welcomed efforts by U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar to consolidate security in the region. The statement, carried by Gulf news agencies monitored in Nicosia, said the ministers "noted with satisfaction progress made in contacts with the Islamic Republic of Iran and looked forward to a new phase of cooperation in the interest of regional security and stability." The ministers, from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates, noted with "deep concern the aggressive policy of the Iraqi regime and its proscription in implementing U.N. Security Council resolutions related to its aggression on Kuwait." The news agencies earlier quoted Qatar's Foreign Minister Mubarak Ali Al Khater as saying in an opening address that improved relations between Iran and the six GCC states would have a positive impact on future security and stability in the Gulf.

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Crown Prince attends army exercises

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday toured a number of Armed Forces units and watched training exercises. The Crown Prince, who was accompanied by Chief of Staff General Fathi Abu Taleb, was briefed on the training programmes being implemented. The Prince and the army chief watched military exercises with live ammunition and expressed appreciation of the officers' endeavours. The Prince conveyed to the troops greetings from His Majesty King Hussein, the Armed Forces supreme commander. Senior army officers and the Armed Forces inspector general attended the exercises.

Jordan to get \$10m IDB loan

BAHRAYN (R) — The Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank (IDB) said Sunday it would provide \$190 million to help finance development and foreign trade in Islamic states. The allocation includes \$10 million for Jordan. A statement from the 45-member IDB gave details of the loans but did not say when they would be extended. Jordan would receive \$10 million to cover the cost of oil imports from an IDB member state. Iran would receive another \$10 million to pay for steel imports. Pakistan would receive \$32 million to finance the purchase of an 85,000-tonne oil tanker and another \$6 million to finance palm oil imports from Malaysia, the statement said. The bank would also cover the cost of equipment purchases for Pakistan's national company for yarn and weaving worth \$18.4 million. Tunisia would receive \$18 million to finance the purchase of a passenger ship and another \$5 million for cotton imports. Morocco would receive a \$15 million loan to cover the cost of oil imported from an IDB member state and another \$7.29 million to help finance part of a dam project. Algeria would receive \$13 million for cotton imports from IDB member states and another \$2.2 million to pay for cement imports from Morocco.

Jordan recognises Baltic states

AMMAN (R) — Jordan has recognised the Baltic states' independence and will soon establish ties with Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, a government official said Sunday. He told Reuters the decision was taken by the Council of Ministers during their weekly session Saturday evening. The Soviet Union, which annexed the three Baltic states in 1940, officially granted them independence earlier this month.

Arabic economic daily launched

CAIRO (R) — A newspaper saying it is the Arab World's first Arabic-language finance and economic daily began publication Sunday. The 16-page Al Aman Al Youm (The World Today) led its first issue with a report from Moscow that Russian President Boris Yeltsin wanted balanced relations with Arabs and Israelis in the Middle East. Mr. Yeltsin was reported to want economic relations to be the focus of Russia's ties with the Arab World. The newspaper, edited by Imadaddin Adib, is published in Cairo by United Journalists, a British-registered company run mainly by Egyptian reporters and writers.

Japan's minesweepers complete mission

ABU DHABI (R) — Japan's six-vessel minesweeping flotilla will leave the Gulf on Sept. 23 after searching for Iraqi mines planted during the Gulf war. It was the Japanese navy's first mission outside home waters since World War II. Four minesweepers, backed by two support vessels, destroyed 34 mines in northern Gulf during their three-month tour. Captain Tsotsu Ochiai, commander of the overseas minesweeper force, told reporters on the supply ship Tokiwa in Abu Dhabi.

Israeli ministers call Bush a liar and an anti-Semite

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli cabinet ministers Sunday launched fierce attacks against U.S. President George Bush in the raging row over Israel's request for \$10 billion in housing loan guarantees. At least one minister described Mr. Bush as a liar and an anti-Semite. The minister also said Israel should not attend the proposed peace conference scheduled for next month.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir had to intervene to tone down the angry outbursts from his ministers at the weekly cabinet meeting, Israel Radio said.

Some ministers urged Mr. Shamir to stand firm against the administration and "hit back fiercely" against Mr. Bush's insistence on delaying the loan guarantees to Israel for the absorption of the Soviet immigrant influx, the radio said.

Mr. Bush was called a liar and accused of anti-Semitism, it said. But Mr. Shamir, along with

Foreign Minister David Levy and Defence Minister Moshe Arens, counselled against such strong language, and Mr. Arens rejected the anti-Semitism charge.

Hard-line Minister-without-Portfolio Rehavam Zeevi "offered unprecedented criticism of President Bush and called him an anti-Semite," according to Eden Blitental, Mr. Zeevi's adviser.

Asked by reporters waiting outside the closed session about his comments, Mr. Zeevi said: "I said he was very close to it — to being an anti-Semite and anti-Israel. Israel has to fight the (U.S.) administration..."

"I think we have to agree with the president of the United States and to tell him that if he wants to take back four months on the guarantees, we can postpone the conference for the next four months until he will have time to decide on the loan guarantees," he said.

Mr. Zeevi's adviser also told reporters: "Minister Zeevi accused President Bush of being a liar, of using cheap demagogery by saying Israel is asking for financial aid rather than merely guarantees while by comparison giving billions of dollars of aid to Egypt."

The angry words reflected the deep and perhaps unprecedented rift that has opened up between the U.S. and Israel since Mr. Bush last week threatened to veto early congressional approval of the \$10 billion Israel is requesting as loan guarantees.

But it also demonstrated a desire among senior ministers to cool the rhetoric and wait for U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, who arrives here Monday.

Israeli media said Mr. Baker appears more flexible than Mr. Bush on the subject of the loan

(Continued on page 5)

Hopes fade for quick hostage release

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Lebanon's Shi'ite leaders dampened hopes that a Western hostage would go free within hours on Sunday but politicians and diplomats said the prospects for a release within days remained excellent.

A pro-Iranian cleric, Sheikh Ahmad Taleb, said Saturday the kidnappers would set free one of two British hostages — Church of England envoy Terry Waite or former World War II fighter pilot Jack Mann — within 24 hours.

Mr. Mann, 77, was the more probable choice because the kidnappers would want to keep the more valuable Waite until later in a complicated step-by-step exchange process.

Asked if the release of a Westerner were imminent, he said:

"I can't say in a matter of days, but I can say it's a matter of weeks — provided that American and

Western pressure continues to be

put on Israel to release further Arab prisoners from Israeli prisons."

"Taleb backed off for unknown reasons," said a diplomat. "First he said 24 hours, then 48 hours and even plain 'soon'."

The country's highest-ranking Shi'ite Muslim cleric said in an interview that a Western hostage would be released within weeks, not days.

Sheikh Mohammad Mehdi Shamseddine, who spoke to the British Broadcasting Corporation, also called for a comprehensive swap of Arab prisoners held by Israel in return for Western hostages, rather than a step-by-step process.

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Western pressure continues to be

(Continued on page 5)

Talabani reports progress in talks with Baghdad

ANKARA (Agencies) — Iraqi Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani, who has been holding out against a draft autonomy agreement with the Baghdad government, was quoted Sunday as saying the autonomy negotiations had made progress.

Mr. Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), told the semi-official Anatolian news agency that despite the progress, which he did not describe in detail, the months of talks had not yet reached a conclusion.

He was speaking on arrival in Ankara to meet Turkish officials. He said he would go on to the United States but gave no details of his talks in either country.

Mr. Talabani has reportedly taken a tougher line on autonomy than fellow rebel leader Massoud Barzani of the Kurdish Democratic Party, who has done most of the negotiating.

His visit coincided with the presence here of the representatives of KDP.

oil province of Kirkuk in the autonomous region and Kurdish demands for guarantees that Iraq will be more democratic.

Mr. Talabani denied a Turkish newspaper report that Iraqi Kurds had promised to keep out Kurdish separatists from Turkey, who frequently cross into northern Iraq, in exchange for humanitarian help from Turkey.

Mr. Barzani's party and the Turkish government have also denied the report.

Mr. Talabani met with Kaya Topcu, an aide to President Turko Ozal immediately after his arrival. No details were made available after they meeting.

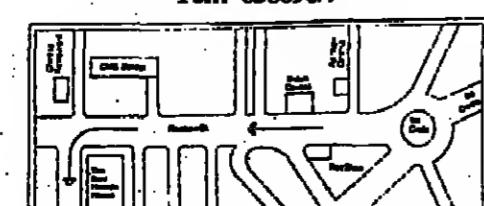
He told reporters earlier Sunday in Diyarbakir in southeastern Turkey that he would also visit the United States. He did not say who he would meet with the United States.

His visit coincided with the presence here of the representatives of KDP.

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Tunisia reports arrest of activists

TUNIS (R) — Tunisia said Sunday the authorities arrested a group of Muslim fundamentalists on Thursday but did not confirm that the spokesman of the outlawed Nahda movement was among them. In a statement issued in Paris Saturday, the Nahda movement said its spokesman in Tunisia, Habib Ellouze, had been arrested along with four other members of the group, including one with his wife and two-year-old child. "A group of people were arrested in the Bizerte area (northwest of Tunis) during investigations into a fundamentalist plot, but the name Habib Ellouze does not figure among their identity papers," an official source told Reuters. The source said the authorities were making inquiries to find out if their identity papers were false. He denied that a child had been detained. "We do not arrest babies," he said. Mr. Ellouze, a member of the Nahda's politburo, had been the movement's underground spokesman for several months. Most other members of the Nahda leadership are in prison or in exile. Police had been looking for Mr. Ellouze since May, when authorities announced the arrest of 300 Muslim activists on suspicion of subversion. Early this month the authorities announced they had found a cache of rifles and handguns in a Tunis suburb.



KING RECEIVES IRANIAN MESSAGES: His Majesty King Hussein Sunday received a message from Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani dealing with bilateral relations and the situation in the Middle East. The message was delivered by Mohammad Kazemi, director of the Middle East Department at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, in an audience at the Royal Court. The audience was attended by Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and the military advisor to the King, His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammad (see related story on page 3).

Moscow pushing for peace parley, ambassador says

ALGIERS (Agencies) — The Soviet Union, despite upheavals at home, is pushing ahead with efforts to arrange a Middle East peace conference, the Soviet ambassador to Algeria said Sunday.

Moscow believed that "if Israel abandoned its severe and dictatorial position," a suitable formula would be mixed Palestinian-Jordanian representation, he added.

"But at the same time other variants are possible. We do not exclude anything or reject anything."

Israel has agreed to attend provided that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has no say in the composition of the Palestinian delegation and that none of the Palestinian delegates are from Arab East Jerusalem.

Syrian officials said Sharra flew to Bonn on Sunday for talks with German officials on Middle East peace and cooperation. Diplomats said the hostages might be raised during his visit.

The kidnappers demand Germany free two Hizbullah members jailed for hijacking and kidnapping as part of the exchange for two German hostages. Bonn

is up to the Palestinians themselves to define their position, what form their representation takes (and) responds to their future national interests," he said.

"That is why the Soviet Union has proposed several variants... the Soviet Union considers that it

Israeli soldier shot dead in West Bank

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Unknown assailants shot dead an Israeli soldier in the occupied West Bank and military sources asserted Sunday that Palestinians were switching from stones to firearms in their uprising against Israel.

In Nablus, the West Bank's largest city, Israeli soldiers opened fire on stone-throwers and fatally wounded a Palestinian teenager, the army and Palestinians said.

The army and hospital officials identified the victim as Burak Al Masri, 17 and said he was shot in the head. Nahli residents were observing a general strike Saturday in protest of Friday's shooting death of a Palestinian youth who was also shot during a stone-throwing clash with soldiers. Arab journalists said.

Israel Radio said two men armed with an Uzi sub-machine gun and a Soviet-made Kalashnikov carried out the attack.

Iraq to seek remains of troops buried alive

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq

wants to recover the remains of Iraqi troops buried alive by U.S. forces in the Gulf war and appeals to the world to condemn this "odious crime," Foreign Minister Ahmad Hussein Khader said Sunday.

In a statement carried by the Iraqi News Agency (INA), he said his ministry had drawn up urgent messages to international organisations calling on them to "condemn this odious crime and expose its dimensions and motives."

The ruthless killers who buried the troops in their trenches should be "eternally cursed," he said.

The use of earthmovers and tanks outfitted with ploughblades to bury dead Iraqis, and in some cases soldiers still alive, was reported last Thursday by the New York newspaper Newsday.

Three brigades of the First Mechanised Infantry division were employed the machines to destroy about 110 kilometres of trenches defended by about 8,000 Iraqi soldiers, the newspaper said.

The action came last winter as

(Continued on page 3)



Najibullah pledges cooperation with superpower peace plan

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — Afghan President Najibullah has promised cooperation with the United States and the Soviet Union over their decision to halt all weapons supplies to the warring sides in his country.

He assured support for the plan in messages sent on Saturday to President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union and President George Bush of the United States, official Kabul Radio said.

The broadcast, monitored in the Pakistani capital Islamabad, quoted Mr. Najibullah as saying the superpower agreement resembled an earlier United Nations plan to end the 13-year-old Afghan war.

The five-point plan proposed by U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar last May envisaged a ceasefire and a transitional administration leading to elections.

The radio said Mr. Najibullah announced the full support of his government for the Soviet-U.S. agreement to cut off all arms supplies by January to allow free elections.

Kabul earlier said it was ready to stop its war against Western-supported guerrillas.

Radical guerrillas said they would continue fighting to topple Mr. Najibullah's government in Kabul, though some have given a guarded approval to the arms cutoff deal announced in Moscow Friday.

Two major guerrilla parties based in Pakistan welcomed the agreement Friday and called for its strict implementation, saying the arms cutoff would hasten the collapse of Mr. Najibullah's government.

But radical guerrilla leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar Saturday partly retracted from a previous statement of approval by his Hezb-i-Islami Party and said the agreement contained a trick to bolster Mr. Najibullah.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin Friday announced the agreement to halt

arms supplies by January and proposed a ceasefire between Kabul and the rebels.

Mr. Hekmatyar said in a statement the decision to continue arms supplies until January was "based on ill-intention" and meant to prolong Mr. Najibullah's government.

His views were shared by another radical guerrilla leader, Mohammad Younis Khalis, who called the U.S.-Soviet agreement unjust, saying it could further increase the armament imbalance in favour of Kabul.

Jamiat-i-Islami guerrilla party leader Burhanuddin Rabbani said Friday: "If the Soviet Union has really decided to cut off assistance (to Kabul) we welcome it."

He rejected an appeal from Mr. Perez de Cuellar to the Mujahedeen not to attack Kabul.

Mr. Hekmatyar was heavily involved in a coup attempt by Afghan Defense Minister Shah Nawaz Tanai in March last year and believed another attempt could be made to topple Mr. Najibullah.

"We expect a change at any time in Afghanistan because the internal dynamics are moving to change," an official of Mr. Hekmatyar's Hezb said.

Hezb, one of the most powerful of the seven guerrilla groups based in Pakistan, has stayed aloof from recent efforts orchestrated by Pakistan and Iran to try to bring Mujahedeen leaders onto one platform.

The Mujahedeen have publicly refused to deal with Mr. Najibullah or senior figures in his Watan (Homeland) Party while maintaining contacts in secret.

Pakistan's attitude will be vital because it has acted as the conduit of arms to the guerrillas and main distributor for individual groups and commanders throughout the war.

Pakistani Foreign Secretary Shaharyar Mohammad Khan on Friday called the U.S.-Soviet agreement "a move in the right direction" but said it would have been better as part of an overall

peace package.

The Kabul government has been heavily dependent on Soviet assistance since the last Red Army troops withdrew from Afghanistan in February 1989. Western diplomats estimate the Kabul government has received as much as \$300 million in military and humanitarian aid from the Kremlin every month, although the Soviets contend that figure is exaggerated.

Mr. Hekmatyar denounced the Moscow agreement as "a plot to deceive the Mujahedeen" and to deny them their hard-fought victory.

"The Soviets were ready to put an immediate end to the military supplies to Kabul, but the Americans seemed unwilling just because they had no alternative for Najibullah," said Mr. Hekmatyar, who dislikes the Soviets and the West.

"The continuation of military supplies to the puppet regime during the next fall will guarantee its survival," said Mr. Hekmatyar.

"The date for the cessation of arms has been postponed in a bid to give new life to the puppet regime. But God willing, the regime will not last long because the Mujahedeen are determined to take a befitting action against it," he said.

But the delay also has provided a window for the shipment of massive quantities of weapons, ammunition and supplies for the guerrillas, who reportedly have as much as two-year stockpile.

Moscow and Washington said Friday that they would not increase shipments to their warring clients.

But witnesses Saturday said they saw trucks hauling supplies, including two tanks, across the frontier towards the Afghan border town of Torukm.

In Kabul, witnesses said dozens of giant Soviet transport planes began landing at the city's airport Friday. Earlier this week, only three or four planes arrived daily, they said.

Polisario asks king to cooperate with plan

ALGIERS (R) — The Polisario Front, on the eve of a five-nation North African summit in Morocco, called on King Hassan Sunday to remove the obstacles to peace in the Western Sahara and cooperate with a United Nations peace plan.

The secretary general of the front, Mohammad Abdul Aziz, said in a statement to Reuters the Moroccan monarch should "clear the ground" for a return to peace in the region, where Polisario guerrillas have fought for independence for 15 years.

"The illegal occupation of the Western Sahara and aggression against our people constitute the only obstacle to the realisation of the Maghreb ideal," he said.

A U.N.-sponsored ceasefire came into force on Sept. 6 and a referendum is due to be held next year to give Saharans the choice between independence and integration with Morocco.

But a dispute on the number of Saharans who should take part in the referendum threatens to delay the poll.

Morocco claims the former Spanish colony is an integral part of the kingdom. Algeria backed the Polisario, causing friction between the two Maghreb neighbours until 1989.

Syrian papers renew warnings to U.S.

DAMASCUS (AP) — Syrian newspapers repeated warnings Sunday that U.S. submission to Israeli demands for a \$10 billion housing loan guarantee would endanger the peace process.

"Israel is not interested in a just and comprehensive peace in the region, but is only concerned with receiving more financial, political and military support in order to achieve its expansionist plans," said the daily Al Baath, the organ of the ruling Baath Party.

"Submission to Israel's blackmail is only leading to the destruction of the peace efforts," said an editorial in the English-language Syria Times.

"If the international community realises that Israel is the only party obstructing peace, this will be a positive and important development," said Tishrin, the official government newspaper.

Israel has also warned of threats to the peace process, but only if President George Bush persists in his decision to delay consideration of the loan guarantee, despite his request to delay its consideration for 120 days.

Israel is pressing for approval of the \$10 billion loan guarantee so that it can proceed with the construction of housing for the wave of new Jewish immigrants arriving in Israel.

The issue has also resulted in a confrontation between Mr. Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Speaking during a visit to Paris on Friday Mr. Shamir warned Mr. Bush that delaying the guarantee until after the start of the peace process could backfire and harm the negotiation prospects.

Mr. Shamir argued that Mr. Bush had it backwards.

"If the delay is accepted, this could harden the stance of the Arab states in negotiations," Mr. Shamir said. "They will see this as putting pressure on Israel and this will create unexpected difficulties in negotiations which, even without this, could be difficult and complicated."

The U.S. president declared that "for the first time in history the vision of Israel's sitting with their Arab neighbours to talk peace is a real prospect."

Since the programme began, USAID has provided \$82 million to help more than one million Palestinians in roughly two-thirds

Ghozali assails some FLN members

ALGIERS (R) — Algerian Prime Minister Sid Ahmed Ghozali, who wants parliament to pass a law which could lead to general elections this year, said Saturday some members of his party were trying to destabilise the government.

Mr. Ghozali, appearing on Algerian television, did not name the members of the National Liberation Front (FLN).

The FLN, which ran the formerly one-party country for nearly three decades, dominates parliament which Mr. Ghozali wants to change election laws so a date for the poll can be set.

"There are members who are acting, night and day, to make the government and its programme fail," he said.

Algeria's first multi-party general elections were due to be held on June 27 but were postponed after violence involving Islamic fundamentalists protesting at the original law which they said was fixed to favour the FLN.

Mr. Ghozali, who has promised clean and fair elections, said a militant FLN minority was campaigning against individual ministers in an attempt to destabilise the government.

"But I tell them, 'if you have the intention of making the government fail, you are incapable. We held firm,'" he said.

"I regret as a citizen that these minority people give the impression the FLN does not want power to alternate in different governments."

He said he hoped parliament would meet and vote on the election law changes before the end of the month "to enable the head of the government and the President (Chadli Benjedid) to keep to their promise to hold elections before the end of the year."

Mr. Benjedid has said the election date would be fixed when all preparations, including the change in election law, had been completed.

Mr. Ghozali has asked parliament to hold a special session on Sunday to debate and pass a new draft election law, submitted to the National Assembly last Wednesday.

But Parliamentary President Abdul Aziz Belkadem said a session opening Sunday would not give deputies enough time to devote to such an important change.

USAID names representative for West Bank programme

WASHINGTON (USA) — Suzanne Oids, a 10-year veteran with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), was sworn in last week as the USAID representative in the agency's West Bank programme.

She is the first person to hold this position and will be based in Jerusalem.

Ms. Oids took the oath of office in a ceremony at the State Department attended by USAID Administrator Dr. Ronald W. Roskens and other senior officials from USAID and the State Department.

She will direct the programme, which began in 1974 to demonstrate America's concern for the humanitarian and economic needs of Palestinians in the West Bank. Over the past year, USAID has provided Palestinians with about \$15 million in economic assistance and food aid.

More recently, she has served as a health/population development officer in the agency's Bureau of Asia and the Near East; as director of USAID's population office in India; and as narcotics coordinator in the bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Army worms attack crops in Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA (R) — Ethiopia's northern province of Tigre, trying to recover from a devastating civil war and drought, is facing a new fight — against swarms of crop-eating army worms. The Ethiopian news agency said Sunday that two planes of the Desert Locust Control Organisation for East Africa (DLCOEA) were spraying pesticide to control the insects. Aid workers were quoted as saying the pests would add to the crisis caused by drought and famine in which more than 2.4 million people are dependent on emergency food-aid. The United Nations is airlifting food to Tigre from the Red Sea port of Djibouti to try to overcome transport bottlenecks.

Kuwait, Bahrain recognise Baltic independence

KUWAIT CITY (AP) — Kuwait and Bahrain Sunday recognised the independence of the three Baltic states of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. The decision was taken at the cabinet's weekly meeting and announced on the state-run Kuwait radio. The Soviet Union, which annexed the three states in 1940, granted the three states independence earlier this month. Bahrain also recognised the Baltic states' independence on Sunday, its state-run Gulf News Agency reported.

Moroccan group condemns Serfaty's loss of nationality

RABAT (R) — Morocco's Association of Human Rights (AMDH) urged the government Sunday to revoke its decision to strip Marxist leader Abraham Serfaty of his Moroccan nationality. The AMDH, one of three rights groups in Morocco, said in a statement it was relieved that Mr. Serfaty was released Friday after 17 years in custody. The government said Mr. Serfaty, leader of the outlawed Marxist-Leninist group Ila Amara (Forward), was expelled immediately after his release. It said he had Brazilian, not Moroccan citizenship. He was jailed for life in 1977 for plotting to overthrow the monarchy of King Hassan. AMDH "expressed its astonishment and its condemnation of the procedure used to strip him of his nationality and expel him from the country on his release, and demands that the government revoke it," the group said. Mr. Serfaty, 65, was born in Casablanca of a Jewish family. The Interior Ministry said he had stayed in the past that he was a Brazilian citizen and he was expelled as a foreigner.

Iraq to return art treasures to Kuwait

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait expects to receive the first shipment Monday of Islamic art treasures that Iraq took from the emirate during its seven-month occupation. Officials in Kuwait said the shipment would be flown from Baghdad on a U.N. plane. They did not have details on how many of the 17,000 missing artefacts — from one of most important collections of Islamic art in the world — would be returned in the first stage. Representatives of Kuwait, Iraq and the United Nations began work in Baghdad Saturday on lifting, packing and shipping the treasures. Kuwait did not send a delegation to Baghdad and was represented by four Britons and an American. The emirate's two principal museums were the House of Islamic Antiquities and the Kuwait National Museum.

Head of U.S. central command to visit Gulf

MANAMA, Bahrain (R) — General Joseph Hoar, commander of the U.S. military central command in Tampa, Florida, will visit the Gulf for the first time later this month. U.S. military officials in the region said. A spokesman for the U.S. military in Dhahran declined to give details of the general's agenda, which will include visits to Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Gen. Hoar succeeded General Norman Schwarzkopf, who commanded U.S.-led allied forces in the Gulf war against Iraq. Gen. Schwarzkopf retired last month. The United States and Kuwait are expected to sign a 10-year defence agreement soon that provides for joint training and the placement of U.S. military equipment in the emirate. Pentagon officials say Defense Secretary Dick Cheney is engaged in talks aimed at reaching similar agreements with Kuwait's five Gulf Arab allies — Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

Kuwaiti ruler to visit U.S. Thursday

KUWAIT (R) — The emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, will pay an official visit to Washington starting Thursday.

Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Dhari Abdullah Al Othman, told reporters after a cabinet meeting Sunday that the visit would continue until Oct. 1.

It would "climax the good relations between the two friendly countries."

Earlier this month, Kuwait signed a military cooperation agreement with the United States.

The defence minister, Sheikh Ali Sabah Al Sabah, said two weeks ago the agreement, under which the U.S. would stockpile weapons and carry out joint exercises in the emirate, would be signed soon.

A U.S. led multi-national task force ended Iraq's seven-month occupation of Kuwait in February.

Other Carriers (Terminal 2)

13:20 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
13:20 Beirut (RJ)
17:25 Bangkok (RJ)
18:00 Cairo (RJ)
18:25 Istanbul (RJ)
20:00 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
20:15 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
20:15 Moscow (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:15 Beirut (ME)
09:45 Cairo (ME)
15:15 Doha, Bahrain (GF)
23:30 Paris (AF)

Maghreb leaders think of internal problems as union meets in Casablanca

King Hassan II

fervere in January.

Mauritania decided to forego

the rotating chairmanship this year due to ethnic tensions and demands for political reforms voiced by its black minority.

Another ethnic conflict has tended to sour relations between Algeria and Libya. The Algerian press has alleged Libya armed Tuareg rebels fighting the Mali government for autonomy and causing a flood of Tuareg refugees into southern Algeria.

Diplomats said these problems were unlikely to be on the agenda of the two-day summit but they would certainly be discussed informally.

The agenda includes a joint stand on the Middle East peace conference planned for next month and a response to Washington's suggestion that the Maghreb should take part.

Another major item is the

AMU's relations with the European Community, the area's biggest trading partner. Diplomats said experts would meet in Morocco on Sept. 18-20 to prepare a Foreign Ministers' meeting between the Maghreb five and four EC members France, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

The promotion of inter-

Maghreb trade, at present only

eight per cent of their total ex-

changes, is also high on the agenda. It has so far been stalled by failure to agree on a payments system.

A final problem is where to base the AMU's headquarters. Tunisia is anxious to play host following the Arab League's move to Cairo.

Primakov in Kuwait talks aimed at boosting relations

KUWAIT CITY (Agencies) —

Soviet envoy Yevgeny Primakov arrived in Kuwait Sunday on a visit to foster Moscow's ties with this oil-rich emirate.

It is the first visit by a Soviet official since Kuwait's liberation from Iraq's seven-month occupation in February.

Mr. Primakov told reporters at Kuwait international airport

Lack of proper background checks for personal loans led to huge losses for Petra Bank, witness testifies

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — All norms of prudent checking of personal creditworthiness were ignored and haphazard granting of personal loans with inferior motives characterised the operations of the bankrupt Petra Bank, according to a key witness in the ongoing trials of cases related to what was once Jordan's second largest commercial bank.

The credit card operations and purchase of foreign government debts also figured high during the Military Court hearings of Petra Bank cases Saturday and Sunday as a battery of five defense lawyers cross-examined Maher Waked, a member of a committee which investigated the affairs of the bank that was taken over by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBI) in August 1989 and ordered liquidated in April 1990.

Dr. Waked, the third witness to testify on the committee's findings said that it was found that there was "gross mismanagement in the personal credit facilities offered by Petra Bank," which, for the first time in Jordan, introduced "plastic money" in the form of credit card operations in the early 1980s.

The personal credit department appeared to be interested in only increasing the volume of business done rather than following prudent inspection of personal creditworthiness and

ability to repay," Dr. Waked said.

The Visacard section was part of a "Consumer Bank" set up by the management of Petra Bank, headed by Iraqi-born Ahmad Chalabi, the first defendant in the case and one of several accused who are being tried in absentia.

The capital of the Consumer Bank, according to Dr. Waked, was equal to if not more than the capital of Petra Bank itself. The Consumer Bank was headed by absent defendant Jafar Agha, a nephew of Dr. Chalabi.

William Amireh, who headed Visacard operations, is one of the accused present in Jordan.

Dr. Chalabi, several members of his family and key defendants in the case refused to respond to court summons and are not represented in court.

The total losses suffered by the Consumer Bank could be between JD 8 million and JD 10 million — seen in Petra Bank books as consistent non-performing loans, Dr. Waked said.

"The loss through Visacard operations can never be known," he said.

Many of the holders of Visacard issued by Petra Bank were non-Jordanians who have left the country without settling their dues to the bank. Many Jordanians who had the card have immigrated, leaving unsettled bills behind, Dr. Waked said. He added that the

management failed on two counts: it did not care to check the credibility of the person to whom it issued the cards and it did not follow an efficient collection policy.

Part of the outstanding Visa card dues have been collected by the liquidators of Petra Bank under an incentive scheme which offered a 25 per cent write-off on dues settled before Aug. 20.

Mr. Amireh's lawyers sought to establish that the head of the operations had little say in setting Petra Bank or Consumer Bank policy and, therefore, should not be held accountable for the losses incurred.

Another "gross violation" of Jordanian banking regulations by the Chalabi management of Petra Bank was its acquisition of a percentage of Polish government debts, Dr. Waked said.

Fawzi Al Ali, an assistant general manager of Petra Bank under the Chalabi management, was involved in the deal and his signature appears in the documents related to the bank's purchase of Polish government debts, which totalled close to \$3 million at 47 cents to a dollar from the commercial market in London, according to Dr. Waked's testimony.

Mr. Al Ali's lawyers sought to prove in court that the transaction was conducted in good faith and the defendant's signature on the documents cannot be interpreted as deliberate complicity to violate Jordan's laws.

Under the deal, which involved a partial reciprocatory deposit in Jordanian dinars with Petra Bank, the Chalabi management incurred a loss of over \$2.5 million, Dr. Waked said.

Defence lawyers Galeb

Suleiman, Issam Sharif, Daoud Tuhaileh, Javed Dimour, Yacoub Far and Nabil Abu Gharibyeh cross-examined Dr. Waked on Saturday and Sunday. The hearing resumes Tuesday.

Jordanian regulations ban any Jordanian bank from engaging in such deals and, in this particular case, the Central Bank was not aware of the transaction until after the take-over of Petra Bank, Dr. Waked said.

Polish government debts were being sold in London in mid-1990 at 20 cents to a dollar and the current value of those held by Petra Bank is almost half that, according to economic experts.

The Chalabi management shipped out \$7 million to help troubled Paris-based Bank of Participation and Deposits under an elaborate deal entered with Wajih Tamraz, head of the defunct Al Mashrek Bank of Lebanon, while it was clear that the beneficiary bank was in dire financial straits and on the verge of collapse, according to Dr. Waked.

The infusion did not help the Petra bank and it collapsed soon afterwards, he said.

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The Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted the Crown Prince as referring in an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to the peace conference due to be held in the coming month. He said that the critical question does not hinge on the date of such a conference as much as it is connected with the United States' pledge to participate in that conference.

Crown Prince Hassan commended President George Bush for threatening to resort to his veto to kill any attempt on the part of the U.S. Congress to grant Israel guarantees on loans needed to help settle Soviet Jews in Palestine.

Referring to Jordan's urgent need at the moment, the Crown Prince said that such needs constitute an important element in the peace process, Petra said.

Petra quoted the BBC as saying that Jordan was facing a difficult economic situation with the return to the country of more than a quarter of a million workers from Kuwait.

Designs and said that Israel was continuously working towards obliterating the Arab and Islamic character of the occupied lands.

The Iranian envoy called for further strengthening of ties between Amman and Tehran. He said the fact that the international conference on Palestine is being held is a form of support for the Palestinian people and their just struggle.

Mr. Kazem also conveyed an Iranian government invitation to Dr. Arabyat to visit Iran at the head of a Jordanian parliamentary delegation.

Mr. Kazem, who is the Iranian foreign minister's special advisor on Middle Eastern affairs, met earlier in the day with the Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Latif Arabyat. Mr. Kazem handed Dr. Arabyat a message from the speaker of the Shura Council which contained

an invitation to Dr. Arabyat to take part in an international conference on Palestine due to be held in Tehran in the coming month.

According to Petra, the four-day conference on Palestine will open on October 19 and will be attended by Arab, Islamic and other countries.

Discussing the subject of the conference, Dr. Arabyat said: "The government will continue to subsidise rice, sugar, powdered milk and bread and has now printed new forms of food coupons to be distributed to the public," Mr. Ibrahim said.

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The introduction of the food coupons and the subsidised prices on these commodities has benefited Jordanian citizens, restaurants and confectioneries, Mr. Ibrahim said.

He added that by restricting the subsidised food commodities to Jordanian citizens alone, the government has thus saved JD 25 million. But, he said, the measures had also enabled the government to

control the trading in supplies and prevent any smuggling of food supplies outside the country.

Mr. Ibrahim said that the Ministry of Supply initially opened 600 centres for the distribution of cards and coupons but later reduced the number to 92.

Under the food rationing



Crown Prince praises Bush for loan guarantee position

AMMAN (J.T.) — The success of the Middle East peace process depends on America's resolve to achieve progress towards a solution, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan was quoted as saying Sunday.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted the Crown Prince as referring in an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to the peace conference due to be held in the coming month. He said that the critical question does not hinge on the date of such a conference as much as it is connected with the United States' pledge to participate in that conference.

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Under the food rationing

system, coupons issued to Jordanian citizens are presented to stores where a customer can buy rice, sugar and milk at reduced rates.

Mr. Ibrahim said that a survey conducted in the country showed that the amounts allowed to each citizens at the reduced prices were sufficient. Each citizen is allowed one and half kilo of sugar and one and half kilo of rice each month and one kilo of powdered milk every four months under subsidised rates.

Food coupons were introduced shortly after the outbreak of the Gulf crisis when Jordan was flooded with nearly 800,000 refugees fleeing the Gulf area. No food shortages were reported because the government had built stock sufficient for the Kingdom for at least six months. The rationing system was deemed necessary to ensure strict control on trading in food supplies.

Organisation calls for closer ties between university researchers and industrial sector companies

KARAK (Petra) — The Jordanian Chamber of Commerce Federation held a meeting Sunday at Al Karak Chamber of Commerce and discussed difficulties facing the commercial sector in Jordan as well as proposed solutions.

Karak Governor Eid Al Qatarni, who attended the meeting, lauded the role of the commercial sector in developing and bolstering the national economy and reviewing Jordan's commercial role through history.

Chairman of the federation's Board of Directors, Mohammad Asfour reviewed the basic elements needed to achieve economic balance in accordance with the principles of supply and demand. He said this balance can be achieved by increasing national exports to adjust the balance of payments, increasing the private

sector's investments percentage to the gross domestic product and reducing the percentage of government spending in the gross domestic product.

Mr. Asfour said Jordanian industries are facing many difficulties. "Some of these difficulties within the industrial sector, some are caused by rules and regulations, administrative procedures, lack of raw material and difficulties in marketing Jordanian products abroad," he said.

He affirmed that the Jordanian economy will overcome the current economic crisis resulting from the return of Jordanian expatriates from Kuwait and other Gulf states.

Jordan, Mr. Asfour said, will be able to absorb the skilled labour coming from the Gulf states and will be able to benefit

from the returnees' capabilities. He called on the government to guarantee the return of the expatriates deposits, to enable them to contribute to the Kingdom's economic growth.

In another development, Mr. Asfour and federation members visited Muta University, near Karak, where they met with the university's acting president, Abdul Rahman Atiyat.

Dr. Atiyat underlined the role of the university in serving the local society and Jordan through continued interaction with the public and private sectors.

The vice-president stressed the importance of promoting ties between the economic sector and researchers at Jordanian universities as a way to encourage scientific research to improve Jordanian industrial products.

Influx of expatriates raises population by 10 per cent

AMMAN (J.T.) — A report compiled by the Ministry of Planning and issued here Sunday announced that the influx into Jordan by hundreds of thousands of expatriates has increased by 10 per cent of the country's population.

The closure of these markets and the return of the workers from Kuwait has adversely affected the country's balance of payments, the report said.

Most of the returnees have settled in Amman and Zarqa, adding to the heavy burdens these two cities have been already facing because of the national population growth, which reached 3.5 per cent annually by the end of 1990, the report said.

In April, the National Population Commission announced that Jordan's population stood at almost 3.5 million by the end of 1990. The April report noted that the country's population was expected to be more than 5.5 million by the year 2005 given the current growth rate.

The Ministry of Planning said that the influx has had a negative impact on the national economy, whose performance has so far been linked to a great extent to those of the neighbouring countries, particularly Iraq and the Gulf states which served as Jordan's major markets.

According to the ministry's report, before the Gulf crisis Jordan used to export 40 per cent of its national products to Iraq and the Gulf states at the rate of 23 per cent to Iraq, 9 per cent to Saudi Arabia and 3 per cent to Kuwait. Jordan imported 85 per cent of its oil needs from Iraq and 15 per cent from Saudi Arabia and 15 per cent from Kuwait.

The ministry's report predicted vast additional allocations in the 1992 fiscal budget to help the government cope with the huge increases in population and their needs in health, education and other services. The report said the government next year will need to allocate at least JD 17 million for health services, JD 13 million for education and JD 5 million for housing.

Substantial allocations will also be needed for capital expenditures such as roads, electricity, telephones and other networks.

To find work for the returnees, the government is expected to need at least JD 1.18 billion.

In a statement to Reuter news agency on Sept. 9, Minister of Planning Ziyad Farid said Jordan would need at least \$4.5 billion within the next five years to cope with the huge population increases. Government statistics had estimated the number of returnees so far at 300,000 but said that more were coming.

It said that the return of the expatriates has now raised the level of unemployment to nearly 20 per cent while the cost of living risen to 8.5 per cent over the first five months of 1991 compared with 4 per cent in the same period of 1990.

Together with this, the country's Gross National Product dropped by 9 per cent in the second half of 1990 as a result of a decline in the activities and exports of Jordanian industrial, commercial and tourism industries, the report added.

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Israeli ministers assail Bush

(Continued from page 1)

guarantees, and may seek a compromise.

Mr. Shamir's top political adviser, Yossi Ben-Aharon, said: "If there is such an offer, we will discuss it and the government will decide."

Israeli opinion is particularly incensed at Mr. Bush for portraying himself as a lonely individual fighting a powerful pro-Israel lobby, and for his version of the link between the Gulf war and Israel, which runs counter what most Israelis believe.

Criticism, both official and in newspapers and radio talk shows, cut across party lines.

Mordechai Gur, a former cabinet minister for the left-wing Labour Party, said Mr. Bush's remarks contained "sharp anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli overtones."

Another hardliner, Agriculture Minister Rafael Eitan, said Israel should forego the loan guaranteed altogether.

Housing Minister Ariel Sharon, architect of the drive to increase Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, told the cabinet that Israel should retaliate by boycotting the peace conference, Israel Radio said.

Mr. Shamir urged the ministers to refrain from public comment on the issue, the radio said. Mr. Arens told Israel TV Israel would stick with the peace process regardless of the loan guarantees.

Cabinet sources said Foreign Minister Levy warned his colleagues against "an escalation of the verbal attacks." Mr. Levy reportedly accused the ministers who attacked Mr. Bush of "losing their heads and their way."

The loan guarantees would entitle Israel to borrow money at preferential rates to settle a wave of immigrants. It expects some one million Soviet Jews by

middle of the decade.

Mr. Bush had asked Israel to delay the loan guarantee request until the peace conference, tentatively planned for next month. After Israel formally presented the request, Mr. Bush threatened to veto the guarantees if put to Congress during a 120-day moratorium.

Sources present at the cabinet session, quoted Mr. Shamir as calling on ministers to avoid rhetoric that could worsen already sour relations between the Jewish state and its guardian ally.

"We will not retreat, we will stick by our position. But we should calm the atmosphere and watch our words," Mr. Shamir was quoted as telling the ministers.

Health Minister Ehud Olmert, a Shamir ally, reiterated that Israel would attend a peace conference though it regarded the issue of "humanitarian aid" separately from peace moves.

But he denied that Mr. Shamir would consider any compromise to end the dispute that might be offered by Mr. Baker on his seventh Middle East mission.

"We have put in our request and there can be no change in the basic attitude of Israel," Mr. Olmert told reporters.

"There is a danger when the United States says that the loan guarantees can interfere with the peace process...it can certainly encourage Arab countries to raise all sorts of demands in the future," he said.

Mr. Olmert questioned the sincerity of Mr. Bush's claim to be Israel's friend.

"The key refrain in all his remarks is, 'I am a friend of Israel'...those who must declare friendship above suspicion and I have been suspicious for a long time now," he said.

Hopes fade for quick release

(Continued from page 1)

turned when his plane was downed in 1986.

Israel believes Mr. Arad is held by Iran or pro-Iranian guerrillas. The U.N. chief held talks in Iran earlier this week.

Lebanese guerrillas want Israel to release some 300 Arab prisoners still held after it freed 51 last week. Israel allowed an expelled Palestinian activist to return home Friday in exchange for the remains of a missing Israeli soldier.

The failure of groups holding up to 10 Western hostages to announce an imminent release added to fears of a delay.

Asked what might have caused a delay, a diplomat in Beirut said, "it could be any one of a thousand things. This is far from an exact science and people are tempted to come up with last-minute demands."

Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bweiz said in Tehran that a conclusive solution to the hostage issue would help Lebanon to solve several domestic problems, Tehran Radio reported. Several Western nations have tied economic aid to Lebanon to a release of Western hostages.

Mr. Bweiz was in Iran on a mission to improve ties with the Islamic republic. The issue of the hostages was discussed because Iran has influence over Shiite fundamentalists who hold Western hostages.

The defence ministry declined comment on the report in the daily *Yedioth Ahronoth*.

The paper quoted political sources as saying Uri Lubrani, the defence ministry official negotiating for the return of six missing Israeli servicemen, had left for Europe at the weekend.

It said he would go to Paris to meet Mr. Perez de Cuellar.

The paper said Mr. Lubrani would hear from Mr. Perez de Cuellar on the fate of missing Israeli navigator Ron Arad, cap-

ioned agreeing to free them.

In Bonn, a spokesman for Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher declined to speculate on whether Mr. Sharaa was coming to discuss the hostages.

"We are talking to all parties concerned and we have requested the release of all hostages," he said.

The ministry said Mr. Sharaa would hold talks with Mr. Genscher Monday as part of a regular exchange of views agreed on when Mr. Genscher visited Damascus in February. According to a statement, Mr. Sharaa and Mr. Genscher would discuss "the situation in the Middle East, the state of the Middle East peace process and bilateral questions."

Israel's chief hostage negotiator will meet U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar in Paris within a few days in an attempt to end the hostage saga, Israel's biggest newspaper said Sunday.

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Our responsibility to create a better world

By Princess Basma

The following is the text of a speech delivered by Princess Basma last month at the Global Cooperation House in London, which was established by Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University.

THE theme of my talk tonight is on "our responsibility to create a better world." I would like to share with you some of my thoughts on this target to which I am sure, all of us present here tonight have devoted most of our lives.

First of all let me please share with you what I mean by a "better world" — it is a vision of a future in which our global family would be emotionally happier, physically healthier, with its qualitative welfare more equitably shared than it is today or, rightly so, on how all this can be done with environmental preservation. Tonight, without me ignoring this or any other relevant issue, I would like to concentrate on the important issue of child care.

Let us remember that the future belongs to our children and in order to create a better world those should be the prime target of our attention. Whereas the societies of the North matured,

worldwide instant dissemination of knowledge, communication of news and information and encounter among people and cultures. As in the traditional village, where everybody knows and assists everybody else, grievances are shared, needs are collectively addressed and cooperation is imperative in order to achieve the public good and avoid conflicts of interest. So should our global village be developing towards today, but is it?

In order to create a better world in such a transparent universe we have to narrow the disparities which exist today between the North and the South, between those who have, and others who have not, and to sustain a global development with economic growth. Much attention has been focused during the last few years, and rightly so, on how all this can be done with environmental preservation.

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It is childhood, particularly the first few pre-school years after birth, that shapes the future of the human being more than any other period in his life. These are the few formative years on which we must concentrate our utmost attention and it is these same years which are still, unfortunately, very much neglected in many societies of the South, where most of the emphasis was, and still is, placed on schools and post-school education. The planners' belief was that schools and eradication of illiteracy would narrow the development gap; no doubt some progress in education has taken place, however the results, till today, have not lived up to our ambitions. An aspiration for a better future warrants a modification of this strategy by more emphasis on child care and pre-school upbringing.

Therefore our responsibility to

create a better world rests with

our attention and success in car-

ing for our children, particularly

above 45 years old, the population of the South is still very young and many nations have half of its population fifteen years old or younger. It is their welfare and upbringing which should be our target in order to arrive at a better future.

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Saddam seen as tightening grip on power

By Rawhi Abeidoh
Renter

NICOSIA — By sacking the man who pledged to work for political pluralism, President Saddam Hussein has tightened his grip on the ruling Baath Party by placing kinsmen and other henchmen in top posts.

Iraqi exiles in Europe said on Saturday the dismissal of Saad Hammadi as prime minister of the eight-man Revolution 'Command Council' (RCC) was a blow to pledges of democracy and economic liberalisation following Iraq's defeat in the Gulf war.

"Hammadi was the only firm advocate of pluralism. He was courageous enough to call a

spade a spade," one said.

Mr. Saddam was his own prime minister until the appointment of Mr. Hammadi nearly months ago at the height of the failed Shiite rebellion in southern Iraq.

The exiles say Mr. Hammadi's sacking, following a two-day meeting of the Baath Party on Friday night, meant that Mr. Saddam felt confident enough of his authority to purge the party and government of figures who might have challenged his rule.

The Baath (Arabic for renaissance) Party has ruled Iraq as the sole unchallenged party since 1968.

"The collapse of the Kurdish and Shiite rebellions and the failure of the West to unseat him has given Mr. Saddam a new lease of

life," one exile said.

Baghdad Television said the party reelected Mr. Saddam, who has led Iraq since 1979, as its secretary-general. Mr. Hammadi's dismissal was due to lack of support in Baath Party elections, it said.

Mr. Saddam replaced Mr. Hammadi with a fellow Shiite, Mohammad Hamza Al Zubaidi, apparently to please Iraq's majority but largely powerless Shiite Muslim sect. But he also sacked Hassan Ali Nassar, another Shiite in the Sunni Muslim-dominated RCC.

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SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

U.S. beats Jamaica 1-0 in soccer

HIGH POINT, North Carolina (R) — The United States beat Jamaica 1-0 (halftime 1-0) after Hugo Perez lofted a free kick from the top of the penalty area and Sadiq Gjoobalaj, appearing in his first international soccer match, headed it in on the right side.

American retains WBO title

GOLD COAST, Australia (R) — American Manning Galloway retained his World Boxing Organisation (WBO) welterweight title against Australian challenger Jeff Malcolm Sunday with a unanimous points decision after a 12-round bout. Malcolm, 35, announced after the fight that he was retiring after a 20-year career.

Thobela retains title before home fans

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Dingaan Thobela outclassed top-rated challenger Antonin Rivera to win a unanimous decision Saturday and retain the World Boxing Organisation (WBO) lightweight world championship in the first title bout in this country in five years. Thobela, who turns 25 this month, was staggered by a left hook in the fourth round but otherwise controlled the fight with stiff jabs and fluid combinations to improve his record to 26 wins and one draw. It was his second successful defence of the title he won almost a year ago over Mauricio Aceves, also in a 12-round decision. The judges scored the fight 115-114, 118-112 and 117-12, known as the "rose of Soweto" because he comes from the sprawling black township outside Johannesburg. Rivera, a former International Boxing Federation featherweight champion from Puerto Rico, had his record fall to 23 victories, eight losses and a draw.

Chavez easily beats Smith, keeps title

LAS VEGAS, Nevada (R) — Undefeated World Boxing Council (WBC) super lightweight champion Julio Cesar Chavez of Mexico had no trouble retaining his title, taking a 12-round unanimous points decision over speedy but overmatched Lonnie Smith of the United States. The win was as easy as oddsmakers had expected. Chavez, a 13-1 favourite, won by scores of 118-106, 119-107 and 118-109 from the judges. There were no knockdowns in the one-sided bout, but Chavez jarred Smith several times with right to the head in the final three rounds. This could be Chavez's last fight at the 140-pound (63 kg) division. "I'm going to move up in weight," said Chavez after the bout. "It was difficult to make this weight." Promoter Don King indicated Chavez's next fight will be in the 147-pound (66 kg) welterweight division.

Yugoslavia wins junior handball title

PIRAEUS, Greece (AP) — Yugoslavia beat Sweden 27-16 (8-7) to win the title of the 8th World Men's Junior Handball Championship. In another game, the Soviet Union beat Spain 27-25 and took the third place. A total of 16 countries took part in the 10-day competition held in this port city.

'Magic' Johnson marries

LANSING, Michigan (R) — After more than 10 years of courtship and one postponement, Los Angeles Laker star Earvin "Magic" Johnson finally married his college sweetheart. Johnson, 32, exchanged vows with Earletha Kelly, 32, at a private ceremony in front of more than 200 guests at his parents' church in Lansing, north of Detroit. Relatives attending the 15-minute ceremony said Johnson, best known for running the Laker's "showtime offence" on the court, hesitated briefly when it came time to recite his vows. "He had a problem with the wording at one point," said one guest. "It was a bit of a tongue twister."

Marseille fights back to beat Sochaux

PARIS (R) — Champions Marseille fought back after trailing Sochaux for more than half an hour to emerge with a 3-2 away win in the French League. Marseille, who remain two points behind Monaco, took an early lead when English midfielder, Chris Waddle scored from close range after a Manuel Amoros free kick in the fourth minute. But Sochaux made the going tough for last year's European Cup finalists, equalising through Lionel Prat in the 26th minute and going ahead nine minutes later when Marseille full back Pascal Baills turned the ball into his own goal. Both goals in a minute midway through the second half saved the visitors. Didier Deschamps scored the first in the 69th minute and Ghanaian forward Abedi Pele grabbed the winner with his fifth goal of the season shortly afterwards.

PSV maintains 100 per cent record

AMSTERDAM (R) — PSV Eindhoven maintained their 100 per cent record in the Dutch Soccer League, beating Roda JC Kerkrade 2-1 at home. Two first half goals from Juul Ellerman gave the champions their fourth win in four games. They are now the only side to have won all their matches. Ellerman's first came in the 22nd minute after Roda's Polish goalkeeper Hendrik Boleska failed to hold a seemingly easy shot from midfielder Gerald Vanenburg. Rene Hofman grabbed a quick equaliser for Roda, but Ellerman scored the decisive second goal three minutes before halftime, combining cleverly with Vanenburg to catch the defence flat-footed. The win should boost PSV's morale ahead of their first round first leg European Cup tie against Turkish champions Besiktas in Istanbul Wednesday.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
AND TANIAH HIRSCH
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TOO MUCH TO BEAR

North-South vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
A Q 2
J 7 6
A 9 3
A Q 8 5 2
WEST
9 9 7 4
K Q 10 9
10 7 2
A Q 6 3
A 10 7
SOUTH
K J 10 8 6 5
A
K 8 4
A K 4
THE BIDDING
North East South West
1 6 Pass 2 6 Pass
3 4 Pass 4 NT Pass
5 6 Pass 6 7 Pass
7 8 Pass Pass
Opening lead: King of 7

Declarer was not quite ready to concede. After returning to hand with a heart ruff, declarer cashed the remaining trumps. (On the penultimate round declarer took care to discard dummy's nine of diamonds.) Since West had to hold the king of hearts and jack of clubs, that declarer was forced down to one diamond. The East and South hands were down to three diamonds each.

Declarer led a diamond to the ace, picking up West's queen. When East followed to the next diamond with the six, declarer, who knew that West's last two cards were a heart and a club, confidently finessed the eight to land his grand slam.

Once North raised spades, South checked on aces and, finding none missing, bid six hearts as a form of the Grand Slam Force, asking partner to bid seven with two of the three top honors. North duly obliged.

Jordan Tennis Championship enters 2nd round; Hani Al Ali leads on points

By Aleen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The second round of the Jordan Tennis Championship began Sunday at Al Hussein Youth City with 42 players taking part in the competition due to be held over a period of four days.

The first three of the 15 matches played Sunday resulted in Marwan Hanania beating Wael Al Daqqa 6-2 6-4; Hassan Mahmud overwhelmed Ahmad Al Hume 6-1, 6-0; and Zeid Hanania eliminated Firas Al Daqqa 6-1, 6-0.

The Jordan Tennis Championship is being held in a three round competition in which points are awarded to the top eight players. At the conclusion of the final round the player who has accumulated the most points will be the Jordanian men's single tennis champion.

Io the first round of the competition which was held last month, Hani Al Ali came in first with 250 points, followed by Iman Abu Hamza with 150 points in second place, and Fares Al Azouni third with 100 points.

They were followed by Laith Al Azouni, Saleh Bustan, Wadi Ku'ar, Naser Kamal and Ghassan Al Qadi.

According to the Jordanian national team coach Yossef Al Oreibi the Jordanian men's national team will be determined in accordance with the results and performance of the players after the third and final round of competition due to be held next month.

"More and more players, especially youngsters, are taking an active and serious interest in tennis, which is very encouraging," Oreibi told the Jordan Times.

"We now have around 35 play-

ers of all ages representing the Jordanian national team. The players are very enthusiastic and I believe with continued attendance and training they will achieve good results," he said.

Players like Arwa Al Udwani, Mai Hanania, Rana Ka'war, Laith Al Azouni, Khaled Al Husseini, in addition to promising beginners like Mayada Al Azouni, Dina Nafa', Marwan Hanania, Tharwan Al Quais and many others have had good results and will hopefully do better in future competitions.

In order to have continuous practice, and to further improve the performance and experience of the players, the Jordan Tennis Federation (JTF) has organised different competitions in the country in addition to participating in tournaments abroad.

The Jordanian national teams

recently participated in the Damascus International Championship from Sept. 1-7 in which the Jordanian women won the silver medal in second place and the men's team came in third.

The next important team competition will be the Davis Cup due to begin in February.

Oreibi says the national team will have "an improved standing among the other participating countries."

"Physical fitness is extremely important," Oreibi said. "This and the lack of experience adversely affects our results a lot."

"We hope the Arab Tennis Federation will organize the Arab Tennis Championship soon," Oreibi added. "Competition always provides an incentive to practise harder and greatly enhances much needed experience."

Kaiserslautern thumps Dortmund 4-0

BERLIN (AP) — Striker Juergen Degen scored three times to lead Kaiserslautern to a 4-0 victory over Borussia Dortmund, moving the defending champions up four places to fourth in the Bundesliga after the ninth round.

Juergen scored in the 35th, 40th and 65th minutes to give Kaiserslautern a 3-0 lead before Demir Hotic completed the scoring in the 79th.

Elsewhere in the German first division Saturday, Eintracht Frankfurt remained in first place with a 2-2 draw at home against Nuremberg; VFB Stuttgart re-

mained right behind with 1-1 tie at Cologne; and Hamburger SV matched the leaders' 12 points with a 1-0 victory over Bayern Munich.

In other games Saturday, it was: Dynamo Dresden 3, Wattenscheid 0; Schalke 0, Bayer Leverkusen 0; and the Stuttgart Kickers 2, Werder Bremen 1.

On Friday, eastern German team Hansa Rostock, which held the early Bundesliga lead in the first season since consolidation of separate east and west German leagues, continued its slide losing 2-1 at home to Karlsruhe.

At Frankfurt, defender Thomas Brunner and striker Dieter Eckstein scored goals in the 32nd and 74th minutes to rally Nuremberg from a 2-0 deficit. Eintracht had taken a 2-0 lead by 33rd minute on goals by midfielder Uwe Bein and Ralf Falkenmayer.

In Cologne, Maurice Banach's 40th-minute tally deadlocked the game at one goal apiece after Fritz Walter gave VFB the lead,

Robson ready for England recall

LONDON (R) — England is finding life tough without Bryan Robson, dubbed captain marvel for his heroic exploits for his country.

So much so that he could be pulled off the international scrapheap to add some steel to England's midfield in the European Championship qualifiers against Turkey next month and Poland in November.

Calls for 34-year-old Robson to be recalled to the national side have been gathering pace since the 1-0 defeat by world champions Germany Wednesday.

England cried out for inspiration and tactical awareness against the Germans — the very ingredients Robson brought to the team during his lengthy reign as captain.

Lawrie McMenemy, assistant to England manager Graham Taylor, took pains to praise Robson after Wednesday's defeat and hinted that there may be further international mileage in him.

"He's an idealist of the player we were short of against the Germans," McMenemy said. "Graham has never said that Bryan's international career is over."

However, that has been the assumption since Robson won the last of his 89 caps against Ireland in March.

What has clearly surprised Taylor since then has been Robson's outstanding form for his club Manchester United.

United, chasing their first championship crown for 25 years, stretched their unbeaten league run to eight matches and their lead in the first division to five points Saturday with a 1-0 away win over Southampton.

For the first time for more than 10 years they are bookmakers' favourites to land the title. They have been quoted at 15-8, with Liverpool at 2-1 and champions Arsenal 4-1.

Robson admits to being flattened by talk of an England recall.

"I have been a little disappointed not to have been involved and it's nice to see people suggesting I should still be around the international scene," he said.

"The only way to find out if I could still do it would be to put me in."

United manager Alex Ferguson, however, has never said that Bryan's international career is over.

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Financial Markets in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (September 9, September 13, 1991)

In a weak performance, the dollar dropped significantly Monday and went on to fluctuate within narrow ranges for the rest of the week. The U.S. currency was pressured by continued expectations of adverse U.S. economic reports due later in the week, and a related or unrelated discount rate cut by the Fed. The dollar declined mainly against European currencies as the market believed that a dollar interest rate cut will be matched by a correspondent move in Japan. The dollar thus ended the week an average of 1.44 per cent lower against European currencies, and 0.65 per cent lower against the yen.

In a carryover from the previous Friday, the dollar dropped Monday mainly against the European currencies. The dollar's drop from several support levels Friday, was followed by a break through 1.70 marks Monday triggering a wave of further dollar selling.

The dollar rose marginally Tuesday closing in New York at what was to be its highest closing levels of the week at 1.6938 marks, 1.7290 dollars to the sterling pound and at 1.54.75 yen. But the dollar's rise was limited as the market continued to await the release of U.S. economic reports later in the week, and for the Fed to lower interest rates.

The U.S. currency closed weaker in subdued, directionless trading Wednesday, while traders started to realize that a 0.5 per cent cut in the discount rate was already factored into dollar exchange rates. Thus expectations started to evolve of a rise in dollar rates if interest rates are lowered, as traders cover short positions and take their profits, but will be followed by another wave of dollar selling later.

Thursday took the U.S. currency to its lowest closing levels of the week against most major European currencies. It closed at 1.6880 marks, having closed at its lowest level against the pound sterling the previous day at 1.7340 dollars to the pound. The drop followed the release of U.S. weekly money supply data revealing a major drop of 59.7 billion in M2.

Friday's trading session came in accordance with market expectations, taking the dollar slightly higher against European currencies at the New York close, but at its lowest closing rate against the yen. A mere 0.2 per cent rise in August U.S. consumer prices, and a 0.7 per cent drop in August Retail Sales, combined with the drop in M2 to encourage the Fed to lower its discount rate by 0.5 per cent to 5.00 per cent. The Federal Funds rate dropped by 0.25 per cent to 5.25 per cent as a consequence. As previously expected, the dollar rallied as a wave of short covering ensued. But the U.S. currency dropped again, before rebounding at the close, on expectations of a further interest cut to stimulate faltering U.S. consumer spending, in view of the negative picture painted by the recent economic data including Thursday's money supply figures.

Expectations for this week's dollar performance remain dim, particularly with the widening of the dollar/mark yield gap to more than 3.50 per cent. Some observers maintained that while a dollar drop to 1.65 marks was not ruled out this week, it was unlikely that it will rise beyond a maximum of 1.70 marks and 135.000 yen.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	6/9/1991 Close	13/9/1991 Close	Percent Change
Sterling Pound	1.7185	1.7297	0.65%
Deutsche Mark	1.7155	1.6900	1.51%
Swiss Franc	1.5068	1.4802	1.80%
French Franc	5.8275	5.7525	1.30%
Japanese Yen	135.62	134.08	1.15%

USD Per STG

Currency	6/9/1991		13/9/1991	
	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)
U.S. Dollar	5.62	5.93	5.57	5.75
Sterling Pound	10.37	10.12	10.31	9.93
Deutsche Mark	9.00	9.31	9.06	9.25
Swiss Franc	7.95	7.75	8.06	7.68
French Franc	9.12	9.43	9.12	9.31
Japanese Yen	7.31	6.56	7.00	6.12

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin		
Date: 15/9/1991		
Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	.667	.689
Sterling Pound	1.1883	1.1942
Deutsche Mark	.4074	.4094
Swiss Franc	.4646	.4669
French Franc	.1195	.1201
Japanese Yen	.5121	.5147
Dutch Guilder	.3613	.3631
Swedish Krona	.1114	.1120
Italian Lira	.0543	.0546
Belgian Franc	.01971	.01981
Per 100		

Italian industrialists sound alarm bells on slumping bourse

MILAN (R) — Leading Italian industrialists and financiers are sounding alarm bells about the anaemic state of Milan's bourse, weakened in the past month by a major share scandal and dwindling business.

They said investors and companies seeking fresh capital increasingly might look abroad if structural changes are not made soon.

"I cannot be optimistic about the future of the Italian bourse," Giovanni Agnelli, chairman of the huge Fiat SPA group, told reporters at a business conference.

"The problem is the competition from government securities," Mr. Agnelli said. "Government bonds are placed easily on the market, but you cannot say the same thing about stocks."

The bourse's woes contrast sharply with the bond market, the world's third largest behind the U.S. and Japan. Trading volume on the screen-based bond market soared to a record 10.7 trillion lire (\$8 billion) on Thursday.

Attractive yields and expectations of tax reimbursements to foreign investors have touched off a huge rally last week.

Leading Italian newspapers ran page-one articles about the slumping stock market Friday. "Goodbye to the bourse" was the page-one headline in prestigious national daily *Corriere Della Sera*.

"The bond market is more

attractive and so are other foreign (stock) markets, so there really is no incentive to go into Italy now," said Albert Alonzo, Italian market analyst for Nomura Research Institute in London.

Mr. Alonzo added that key economic issues such as containing the soaring budget deficit and reforming the country's wage-increase system remain unresolved.

"In May and June there were a lot of foreign investors who were expecting a return to the market by domestic investors. That hasn't materialised," Mr. Alonzo said.

Brokers say Italian investors have been frightened about putting their savings in the stock market since a \$5 billion lire (\$65 million) stock scandal erupted in August.

Geneva-based Banque Duménil-Lehle (Suisse) has claimed it was the victim of a swindle carried out by a Turin investment company, which has

soared to a record 10.7 trillion lire (\$8 billion) on Thursday.

Three securities firms caught up in the affair already have collapsed, and daily volume on the Milan market has shrunk to a paltry 50 billion lire (\$38 million).

Operators say the bourse needs several reforms. Among these are a quicker settlement procedure for stock deals, continuous electronic trading to replace the current open outcry system and tighter regulation of the market.

U.S. cigarette sales to Soviets rise 7,200%

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. sales of cigarettes to the Soviet Union increased more than 7,200 per cent in the first half of 1991, the Tobacco Merchants Association of the United States has said.

A major shortage in the Soviet Union last year brought rationing to Moscow and demands for the resignation of prime minister Nikolai Ryzhkov. Major U.S. manufacturers were quick to help fill the gap.

Total U.S. exports of cigarettes in the half-year reached 88 billion pieces, according to Farrell Delman, president of the association.

Sales within the United States have been going down since 1964, when U.S. surgeon general Luther Terry warned that cigarette smoking far outweighed other factors as a cause of lung disease.

The average American over 18 year of age smoked 4,195 cigarettes in 1964. The number was down to 3,121 in 1988, the last years for which figures were available.

"Given the increasing demand for high quality U.S. manufactured American-blend cigarettes... the U.S. could be producing more and more of the world's tobacco supply," Mr. Delman said in a statement.

A few, mostly African, countries that bought no tobacco from the United States in the first half of last year took considerable amounts in 1991: Guinea \$11,299,310, Papua New Guinea \$2,519,238, Manritania \$1,802,970, Gambia \$1,313,760 and Burkina Faso \$683,261.

Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Singapore were also big importers from this country. Turkey's purchases increased even more than the Soviets' — to \$156,885,682 worth from \$22,538,945.

America's tobacco industry is facing a steady decline in overall growth since 1988 had continued this year — in contrast to some less developed countries such as China, where the industrial sector grew by 13.7 per cent on a year-on-year basis in the first quarter of 1991.

Belgium bought \$664,801,717 worth. Michael Marion, public affairs manager for the association, said much of what Belgium bought was reexported to eastern Europe.

The association also recorded increases in the sale of snuff and chewing tobacco.

The U.S. Commerce Department reported U.S. tobacco exports to the Soviet Union as worth \$60,009,107 in the first half of 1991, compared with \$869,167 in the first half of 1990.

Soviets accounted for only a small portion of U.S. cigarette sales. Japan, the leading buyer, took \$765,335,814 worth of U.S. tobacco products.

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Yugoslav forces pound Croats; more troops reportedly surrender

ZAGREB (Agencies) — Federal jets, tanks and gunboats reportedly pounded Croatian forces Sunday in bitter fighting that killed at least 13 people following the rebel republic's blockade of Yugoslav army garrisons.

Fighting engulfed many areas of the republic, and Croatia's claim that its blockade was forcing military garrisons to surrender appeared to make the bloody fighting even more widespread and confused.

Croatia said it had forced 300-400 army troops stationed at facilities throughout the republic, including dozens of officers, to give up. There was no confirmation of the figures.

The federal military used jets, tanks and rocket launchers to pound Croatian strongholds Saturday after Croatia cut food, water and electricity to garrisons.

Later Saturday, Belgrade Radio reported that the barracks in the Danube River town of Vinkovci were relieved by a strong armoured column that broke through the Croatian barricades.

But the Yugoslav News Agency

Tanjug, said early Sunday the clashes in Vinkovci were continued, indicating the barracks still were under siege.

Two federal jets attacked Ploce, midway between Split and Dubrovnik, six times, Croatian TV reported. Split Radio reported three Croat guardsmen were killed and two injured.

A Croatian Defence Ministry official said seven Yugoslav navy boats were in Ploce Harbour and four more were en route from a major naval base on the island of Vis.

Croatian media later reported the boats had opened fire on a maritime warehouse in the harbour.

A military warehouse in Ploce, which Croatia listed as one of the facilities that surrendered, also was said to be under attack.

Tanjug said air forces stopped attacking Ploce after destroying four trucks that were carrying weapons out of the warehouse.

Croatia's decision to blockade military facilities drew sharp criticism from officials of the European Community (EC), who have

been trying to arrange a peace plan for Yugoslavia, and an immediate response from the army.

The army has long been accused by Croatia of helping guerrillas of the Serb minority who have seized a third of the breakaway republic in fighting that has left more than 400 people dead in the past 2½ months. The army has said it only intervened to separate Serbs and Croats.

Tanjug reported three Serb guerrillas died and six were wounded in fighting during the previous 24 hours in Okucani, on the strategic Belgrade-Zagreb Highway. Five Croatian fighters were killed and 15 were injured.

Fierce fighting was reported around the eastern Croatian stronghold Osijak, Pakrac and Stara Gradska, Tanjug said.

Belgrade media said Hrvatska Dubica had fallen to Serb fighters and that the Croats were establishing a new defence line outside of the town, located 90 kilometres from Zagreb.

Zagreb Radio said more than 1,500 mortar shells rained on Vinkovci Saturday and mortar and tank grenade fire resumed

after dawn Sunday.

Pope calls for end to Croatia bloodshed

Pope John Paul called on the Yugoslav government and the European Community (EC) Sunday to put an end to ethnic fighting in the Republic of Croatia.

"I implore once again those responsible in the Yugoslav government to put an end to this tragic and absurd conflict," he said.

"It is not with arms that differences between peoples are resolved," the Pope said at the end of his regular Angelus address from the balcony of his residence outside Rome.

He called on all countries, particularly European, to help end "an unjust and cruel" war between Croatian forces and Serb guerrillas backed by the Serb-led federal army.

"I turn in particular to the European countries, which cannot shirk the grave responsibility they have in the face of this drama," the Pope said.

S. African peace pact brings respite from violence

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Police reported scattered attacks and two deaths, but a national peace pact ushered in relative calm Sunday after a week of vicious black factional fighting.

The white-led government and the two leading black groups Saturday signed the peace accord, which establishes codes of conduct for political parties and the security forces, and sets up bodies to monitor compliance.

Previous peace pacts have collapsed, setting back President F.W. de Klerk's efforts to negotiate a new constitution that will give voting rights to the black majority.

Many observers are predicting

failure for the latest accord, signed after a week-long surge in black township fighting around Johannesburg that left more than 130 people dead.

"Pact signed — not sealed," said the front-page headline in City Press, a leading black-oriented weekly.

Much of the fighting in recent years has pitted supporters of the African National Congress (ANC) against backers of the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party. But the past week was marked by random attacks often carried out with automatic weapons against defenceless commuters on buses and trains.

Police Sunday reported two

overnight deaths in township fighting near Johannesburg. The unrest report also said four people were injured in a grenade attack east of the city, and one man was hurt when he was pushed off a moving train in the Soweto township.

Police said there was no additional trouble reported as of mid-day Sunday, and the township appeared less tense than at any time since the violence erupted Sept. 8.

"We dedicate ourselves to ending the specter of terror in the lives of our people," said ANC President Nelson Mandela.

Some radical white and black leaders either boycotted the

meeting altogether or told the meeting they would not sign the pact because they did not believe it would work.

About 3,000 Zulus supporting Inkatha and armed with clubs, spears and shields appeared without warning outside the downtown hotel where the pact was signed.

Police and soldiers in combat gear with armoured vehicles ringed the dancing and chanting Zulus, who eventually dispersed. However, one Inkatha supporter was hacked to death afterward.

In addition, 16 men died in fighting Saturday at workers' barracks on a gold mine southeast of Johannesburg. Mine officials said the fighting appeared to stem from "tribal differences," and there was no indication it was linked to the long war between the ANC and Inkatha.

Final surveys indicated up to 13 per cent of the 6.4 million Swedes eligible to vote were undecided.

Ozone satellite has communications trouble

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (R) — A satellite that will study holes in the Earth's ozone layer developed communications trouble early Sunday after it was sent into orbit from the space shuttle Discovery.

Ground controllers found difficulty in making and maintaining contact with the upper atmosphere research satellite in the first few hours after its release into space, the U.S. space agency said.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) engineers worked through the night trying to understand the problem but were confident it could be solved without jeopardizing the probe's two-year mission.

"We know we have a very healthy spacecraft," project manager Mike Luther said at mission control in Texas a few hours after astronauts on Discovery set the satellite free in a 354-mile-high (570-km) orbit.

Mr. Luther suspected a "procedural error" in pointing the probe's main antenna but "there's a myriad of things that must be checked," he said.

The troubled antenna is the one designed to beam down data the satellite gathers on the Earth's deteriorating atmosphere through NASA's tracking and data relay satellite network.

Two others on the probe can be used, but with reduced capability, Mr. Luther said.

The deployment was delayed for about half an hour because of the communications problems, which NASA officials thought had been solved.

Because of the delay, the satellite release occurred in darkness, lit only by floodlights in the shuttle payload bay, instead of in daylight as planned.

Flight Commander John Creighton gently maneuvered the shuttle away from the sensitive satellite but stayed closer than planned because of computer aboard Discovery was the only sure communications link ground controllers had with the probe.

They are scheduled to fire the 15,000-pound (6,800-kg) satellite's small jets to boost it 18 miles (29 km) higher into space.

West African leaders try to solve Liberian feud as fighting flares

ABIDJAN (R) — West African leaders will convene a third summit in Ivory Coast Monday to try to end the 21-month-long Liberian civil war at a time of renewed combat.

The meeting takes on added urgency since Liberian exiles two weeks ago launched attacks from Sierra Leone on western Liberia, held by the main rebel leader, Charles Taylor.

Mr. Taylor, in radio broadcasts and through official spokesmen, said he had repulsed the attacks and had even penetrated into Sierra Leone to create a "protective corridor."

There have been no independent reports on the bush fighting, which constitutes the most serious breakdown in a ceasefire in effect since last November.

In a sign of its importance, all 16 members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have been invited to assist a five-nation mediating committee in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast's inland capital.

Senegal's President Abdou Diouf, who last week agreed to send troops to a West African peacekeeping force in Liberia, is due to attend the summit.

Diplomats and officials in Ivory Coast also said President Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria, the regional "superpower" and a key to resolving the war, was also expected. Nigeria is the current chairman of the 50-member Organisation of African Unity.

The war, which Mr. Taylor launched with an invasion from neighbouring Ivory Coast in December 1989, overthrew Liberia's President Samuel Doe, who was assassinated a year ago, but has left the country divided and its economy in a shambles.

Mr. Taylor controls 90 per cent of the country founded in 1847 by freed American slaves while an interim government, backed mainly by Nigeria, runs the capital Monrovia.

The main task of the Yamoussoukro summit, chaired by African's veteran statesman, President Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Ivory Coast, was originally to seek disarmament and confinement of Mr. Taylor's guerrilla forces so elections could be held.

But that agenda has been complicated by the recent upsurge in fighting.

"The work to resolve the conflict is moving slowly," one Western diplomat said. "And it could be affected by the renewed fighting at the border."

Despite intense pressures to resolve the conflict so that Liberia can rebuild and hundreds of thousands of exiles living in neighbouring countries can return home, there remain big differences between positions of the main antagonists.

One of the main sticking points has been the composition of the 7,000-strong West African peacekeeping force controlling Monrovia.

Mr. Taylor has said Nigeria is partly to the civil war because of its links with the late Mr. Doe and has insisted the West African force, known as ECOMOG and dominated by Nigeria, be replaced, preferable by a United Nations peacekeeping force.

Ernest Eastman, foreign minister in Mr. Taylor's rebel government, told a news conference in Ivory Coast last week that ECOMOG "shouldn't be dominated by one nation" — a pointed reference to Nigeria. He repeated the suggestion that U.N. soldiers be sent to Liberia.

At a news conference earlier in

the week, Lamini Waritay, information minister of the interim government in Monrovia, reiterated his government's opposition to replacing the West African forces.

"ECOMOG is the saving grace of the Liberian people," Mr. Waritay said, but added his government would agree to include in ECOMOG forces "from countries." Mr. Taylor is comfortable with this.

Quayle ends Africa tour

U.S. Vice-President Dan Quayle, on a weekend visit to Ivory Coast, said the United States supported the continued presence of the West African force in Liberia.

Mr. Quayle ended a five-nation Africa tour Saturday by advising governments to democratise and end state control of economies if they want American aid.

The United States has been leading the charge for democracy and democratic values, we will continue to do so. Democracy knows no boundary. Democracy is sweeping around the world, and those countries that have not experienced democratic values, I certainly hope that in due time that will," Mr. Quayle said before leaving for Washington.

He earlier told reporters that he had raised human rights issues during visits to two stops on his tour, Malawi and Nigeria. Hastings Banda, the president for life, rules Malawi. Nigeria's military rulers have promised to hand authority back to a civilian government by the end of next year.

Speaking to African business men at the African Development Bank, Mr. Quayle said the wave of demands for democracy sweeping the continent recalled the pressure to end colonial rule 30 years ago.

HANOI (R) — The worst floods in more than a decade have hit the fertile rice-growing areas of southern Vietnam, killing at least 17 people and threatening huge swathes of prime agricultural land, the official Vietnam News Agency (VNA) said Sunday. The flooding, centred in the delta where the Mekong River flows into Vietnam from Cambodia, has forced the evacuation of 10,000 people and may damage as much as 110,000 hectares (275,000 acres) of rice paddies and orchards, it said. The flooding had submerged roads and collapsed bridges in the provinces of An Giang, Dong Thap and Long An, the news agency said. It was the worst flood disaster to hit the region since 1978, VNA said.

Floods hit southern Vietnam

LONDON (R) — Britain, facing record crime and outbreaks of youth riots, is drawing up plans to identify potential criminals among children as young as five, the Sunday Times newspaper reported. It quoted Home Office (Interior Ministry) Minister of State John Patten as saying the government wanted to give special help to children who could drift into life of lawlessness. "We want to identify these youngsters who are at risk at an early stage so we can help them and their parents before they reach the stage where they will face punishment," Mr. Patten said. Draft proposals for a crime prevention drive among five- and six-year-olds were expected to be discussed at talks Sunday between Prime Minister John Major and Home Secretary (Interior Minister) Kenneth Baker, the Sunday Times said. Mr. Baker said Sunday more police officers would be sent to troubled areas and also announced a campaign to crack down on car thefts after a "joy-riding" craze among youths led to violent disturbances.

U.K. cracks down on crime

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Slovak nationalists demand sovereignty

PRAGUE (AP) — Dozens of top Slovak politicians have united



Ingvar Carlsson

Swedes vote for new parliament

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Swedes voted Sunday in parliamentary elections considered crucial for the future of the welfare state as it has been shaped by the ruling Social Democrats.

Pre-election surveys indicated a close election and Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson said he would not be surprised to lose votes to a bloc of four liberal-conservative parties was favoured to win a majority of the 349 Riksdag seats with promises of lower taxes, business growth incentives, reduction of bureaucracy and privatisations.

Carl Bildt, the 42-year-old conservative leader, hoped to replace Mr. Carlsson as prime minister by heading a coalition of his moderate party, The Centre, Liberals and the Christian Democrats.

Mr. Bildt said "if the non-Socialists win, it will be hard for the Social Democrats to make a comeback during the 1990s."

Mr. Carlsson told the Swedish News Agency (TT) Sunday, "It's important that the Social Democrats remain a dominating force, maybe more important than to win the mandate to govern for three years." His party for 53 of the last 59 years.

Until recently the slick, 52-year-old economist looked to be for a similar landslide.

Polls showed his party cruising towards the 44 per cent vote share needed to secure a majority of deputies in the National Assembly.

But dogged criticism from the centre-left Socialists has eroded the PSD's lead.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Hong Kong voters set to snub China

HONG KONG (R) — The British colony of Hong Kong voted in its first direct parliamentary election Sunday, with opinion polls indicating a resounding victory for liberals and a snub for the territory's future master, China. A poll conducted on the eve of voting showed liberal pro-democracy candidates would sweep virtually all 18 directly elected seats in the largely rubber-stamp Legislative Council (Legco). China has supported several candidates through local pro-Peking groups and advised residents on how to vote through its mouthpiece here, the China News Service. "It's time for Hong Kong people to show that they care about democracy," said one voter, a 28-year-old professional woman. Hong Kong must shed its reputation for political apathy before China takes over in 1997, she said. "It's a message to China that people in Hong Kong do care." Fifty-four candidates are running in the landmark poll, which under Hong Kong's system of limited democracy allows less than a third of Legco's 60 seats to be directly elected.

Andreotti arrives in China

PEKING (R) — Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti arrived in Peking Sunday, the latest in a series of diplomatic triumphs for China, which suffered two years of isolation after crushing pro-democracy demonstrations. Mr. Andreotti will be the third leader of a group of seven industrialised democracy in just six weeks to meet Premier Li Peng, widely blamed for ordering the army into Peking's Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989. Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu came on Aug. 10, followed by British Prime Minister John Major on Sept. 2. Both followed the protocol necessity of shaking Mr. Li's hand and reviewing Chinese troops, their bayonets fixed, in front of the Great Hall of the People in Tiananmen Square, where the pro-democracy demonstrators had their headquarters. With Mr. Andreotti's arrival on a six-day tour, visits by Western leaders have become routine again, diplomats said. "The floodgates have definitely opened," one said. "All that is missing is a visit from the U.S."

Floods hit southern Vietnam

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